

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the presently pending claims. Currently, claims 1-92 remain pending in the present application, including amended independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77. Independent claim 1, for instance, is now directed to a nonwoven material having meltblown fibers forming the first exterior surface of the nonwoven material.

Claims 24-26, 30-31, 32 and 67-68 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. Without commenting on the propriety of these rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims satisfy all of the requirements of § 112.

Claims 1-8, 10, 12-14, 16, 21-23, 27-29, 32-41, 43-48, 58-65, 67 and 69-70 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,177,370 to Skoog et al. The remaining claims (with the exception of claims 50 and 52-57 for which no argument was presented in the Office Action) were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Skoog et al., in combination with several other references.

As stated in the Office Action, Skoog et al. discloses a fabric that includes three zones, a synthetic fibers structure first zone, a synthetic fibers structure second zone, and short fiber third zone. The Office Action refers to FIG. 3 of Skoog et al. in which "the first and second zones (120 and 140) include a first spunbond web layer 144 and a second meltblown web layer 128, and a second spunbond web layer 144 and a second meltblown web layer 148. FIG. 3 of Skoog et al. is reproduced below:

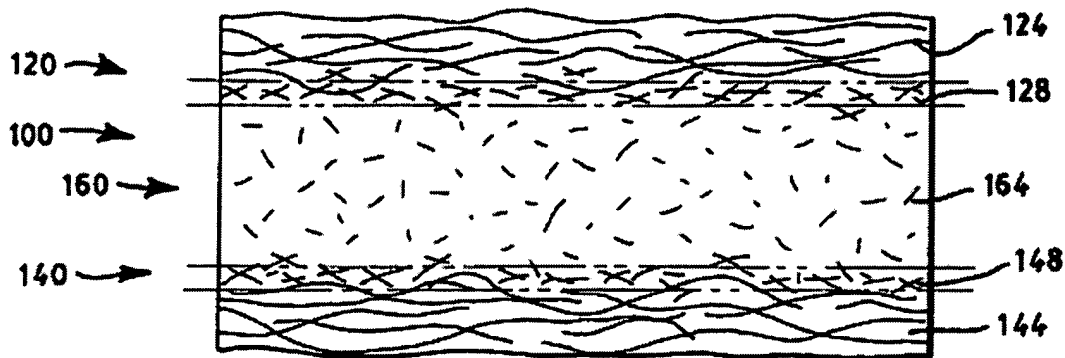


FIG. 3

As illustrated in FIG. 3, spunbond web layers 124 and 144 form the exterior layers of the fabric 100 disclosed in Skoog et al. (Col. 5, lines 25-29).

By contrast, independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77 now require that meltblown fibers form the exterior surface of the nonwoven material, tissue product, or wet wipe. Indeed, the present application is directed to materials having reduced lint and slough. A meltblown "veneer" is applied to at least one side of the material that has been found to greatly reduce lint and slough without substantially affecting the other properties of the material. See Col. 4, lines 25-29 of the present application. Such reduction in lint and slough results from the meltblown fibers forming the exterior surface of the materials.

Applicants respectfully submit that Skoog et al. does not disclose meltblown fibers forming the exterior surface of a nonwoven material, a tissue product, or a wet wipe. Rather, the meltblown layers 128 and 148 are sandwiched between the fabric 100 and spunbond web layers 124 and 144. As such, Applicants respectfully submit

that independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77 are patentable over Skoog et al., either alone or in combination with another reference.

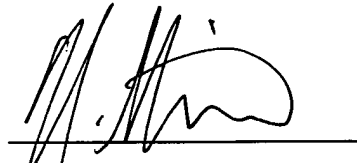
Various dependent claims were also rejected as being unpatentable over the references discussed in detail above. Applicant respectfully submits, however, that at least for the reasons indicated above relating to corresponding independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77, the dependent claims patentably define over the references cited in the Office Action. However, Applicant also notes that the patentability of the dependent claims does not necessarily hinge on the patentability of independent claims 1, 32, 55, and 77. In particular, it is believed that some or all of the dependent claims may possess features that are independently patentable, regardless of the patentability of claims 1, 32, 55, and 77.

In summary, Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims patentably define over all of the prior art of record for at least the reasons set forth above. As such, it is believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Torres-Velazquez is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this Amendment.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Appl. No. 10/748,454
Amdt. Dated March 6, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 6, 2005

Respectfully submitted,
DORITY & MANNING, P.A.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy A. Cassidy', is written over a horizontal line.

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